REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I. Introduction:

Claims 1, 9, 17, and 19 are amended, claims 2 and 10 are canceled, and new claim 22 is added herein. With entry of this amendment, claims 1, 3-9, and 11-22 will be pending.

II. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103:

Claims 1, 3, 9, and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,418,142 (Wolf). Claim 21 stands rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0146003 (Kam et al.). Claims 2, 4-8, 10, and 12-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wolf in view of Kam et al.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 2 and has been further amended to clarify that mapping links for signals between nodes is selected to minimize the differences between the number of links between each of the input nodes and center nodes and the differences between the number of links between each of the center nodes and output nodes.

Wolf is directed to process and devices for establishing point-to-multipoint connections and multipoint-to-point connections. As noted by the Examiner, Wolf does not disclose wherein mapping links for signals between nodes is selected to minimize the differences between the number of links between nodes. With regard to this limitation, the Examiner cites Kam et al.

Kam et al. disclose traffic spreading to reduce blocking in a Clos communication network. A load sharing algorithm is used to spread component signals among the midstage switching stages. An ordered list is made that includes each of the midstage switching modules, and each midstage switching module is evaluated in order to identify a first and second midstage switching module that have connections to the destination switching module corresponding to a destination identifier.

Applicant respectfully submits that Kam et al. do not teach selecting mappings links for signals between nodes to minimize the differences between the number of links between nodes, as set forth in the claims.

Kam et al. first check to see if the connections have sufficient spare bandwidth to accommodate the bandwidth of a component signal. If both connections have sufficient spare bandwidth, the component signal is routed through a first midstage switching module. A second component signal is then routed through a second midstage switching module in order to spread the traffic. A component count variable is incremented after each component signal so that the next component signal will begin at the subsequent midstage module, as long as sufficient bandwidth is available (see, for example, paragraphs [0011] and [0038]).

Kam et al. do not evaluate the differences between the number of links between nodes. Instead, they use a spreading algorithm which selects different midstage modules for subsequent signals.

Accordingly, claims 1, 9, 17, 19, and 21, and the claims depending therefrom, are submitted as patentable over Wolf and Kam et al.

III. Conclusion:

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a

telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application,

please do not hesitate to call the undersigned at (408) 399-5608.

Respectfully submitted,

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